Top Tips

— F O R   S E T T I N G —

U P   A N

ecommerce

— S I T E —

Ecommerce sites are not easy to set up. They can be tricky and time consuming, and can have a lot of teething problems, especially if you have no experience in this area. That is why we have created this comprehensive list of twenty five essential ecommerce tips, to take you through the process with ease.

One

First you'll need to decide if you want to host your shop on an online marketplace like **Etsy** or **eBay**, or launch your own ecommerce site. This will depend on the type and number of products you plan on selling, whether you have the budget to set up your own site, and whether you have the tech know-how.

If you are keen to set up your own site but aren't particularly confident with using web applications, it may be easier to go for a pre-designed template, which usually has easy to use customisation tools. Don't make it too complicated for yourself, you don't want to waste too much time working on it, otherwise it may be more cost effective to hire a web developer to create one for you.

If you plan on changing the products you sell on a regular basis, you will need to look for a platform that supports quick and easy ways to import data, as this will save you a lot of time.

You should aim to choose one of the more popular shopping-cart software programs so you can take orders, calculate shipping and tax, and send out order confirmations, which will help towards creating a good user experience. If customers are able to navigate easily around your site and make hassle free purchases they are more like to return.

The main site we recommend is **Shopify**, as they are really functional, modern, responsive, and super easy to use, which is great if you are just starting out. We have teamed up with Shopify to offer you an exclusive 14 day free trial, so you can test it out before committing. You can access your free trial using this link: **The Right Stripes Special Offer**
The following ecommerce sites have been created using Spotify. Do take a look to see what you can do with it.

faucetface.com

cxxvi.com

skinny-teatox.com

Other options include:

BigCommerce
Volusion
Magneto Go
3dCart
1ShoppingCart

Two

If you're linking your ecommerce site to your website, you will need to ensure you drive people from each area of your website (especially from your homepage) to your ecommerce page, which will ensure you get a good conversion rate. It's not enough to have a link on the navigation bar; you'll need to promote it through ad banners and buttons throughout your site, to drive traffic.

Three

You should then obtain an internet merchant account allowing you to accept credit card payments online. HSBC, NatWest and Halifax all offer these types of accounts, but not all banks do, so you may need to find an online merchant such as Payment Sense, Stripe or WorldPlay instead.

Four

You also need to open a payment gateway account. This is the equivalent of a physical point of sale terminal / cash register. They protect credit card details by encrypting sensitive information, to ensure that the information is passed securely between the customer and the merchant, and between the merchant and the bank. You could try Flagship Merchant Services, Go Cardless or PayPal.

Five

Showcase your products clearly, with high-quality professional photographs from all angles and good product descriptions. Allow users to zoom in on images and ensure you let people know if you are running low on a particular product before they click on the image, to ensure a better user experience. Perhaps take these products out of display altogether or clearly label them as out of stock. Having lots of items that are out of stock will drive people away from your site, so ensure you have lots of stock in all sizes to minimise frustration.

Six

Try promoting 'Editor's Picks' or 'Recommended' products on your homepage as these keep people on your site. Think of your homepage as your shop window and make it as appealing as possible with lots to click on.

Seven

Attaching a blog to your ecommerce site is a great way to keep people on your site for longer, encouraging sales. You could write features about industry trends showcasing products that fit into this collection, or have reader reviews with links to those products.

Eight

At the end of each page, make sure to display images and links to other products to upsell and drive people around the site and to encourage people to spend more.

Nine

If you are able to invest in a smart search plug-in, you could include 'Viewers who viewed this also bought this' to drive more sales. Look at sites such as Amazon or Topshop for examples of how this is done well. Also, try to build a responsive search bar – so that if your customers are searching for 'Red Shoes' for example, the search results are accurate. This will minimise frustration with customers less likely to leave your site.

Ten

Use infinite scroll to reveal all products within a particular section of the site.

Eleven

Each product page should include social media sharing buttons and the 'email this product to a friend' icon, to encourage people to share content from your site via Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest etc.

Twelve

You must consider your user experience and make it easy for your customers to find, look at and buy products on your site. If the shopping experience on your site is enjoyable and easy, you are more likely to get repeat business.

Thirteen

Encourage users to sign up to receive email updates and special offers. Once you build a database you can start sending them product information direct to their inbox.

Fourteen

On each page of your site you will need to ensure you clearly display your logo and branding, search box, payment system icons and SSL Security Certificate, your shopping cart, checkout button, report a problem link, returns policy and customer service contact details, as having these on every page builds trust in the consumer.

Fifteen

If you offer a friendly and flexible returns policy, it will go a long way to instilling confidence in your site, encourage people spend with you.

Sixteen

Create a site that is not only accessible across multiple devices, including mobile and tablet, but also across all browsers.

Seventeen

Create a user friendly sign up form that doesn't request too much information and that is quick and easy to complete. You could also offer customers the opportunity to sign in with their social media accounts, or not to sign in at all, but to go straight through to checkout. The aim is to make the experience as quick and painless as possible.

Eighteen

Once people sign up/in they should be able to access their purchase history or their basket if they didn't check-out on their last visit.

Nineteen

Give customers the chance to pay in a way that is convenient to them i.e. credit card, debit card, PayPal or gift card (if applicable).

Twenty

In the shopping cart, show all fees and charges before customers are sent to the checkout. People don't like nasty surprises. Also, be sure to offer a reasonable or free shipping service, within a short space of time. Asking people to wait more than 14 days for an item could be a turn off.

Twenty One

Once customers make a purchase, send them an email order confirmation thanking them for their order, plus, separate emails confirming shipment stating when they should expect to receive their package.

Twenty Two

It's important for you to manage the data that you capture efficiently. Platforms that allow you to easily upload your data are the best. Use this information to access your customers purchase history. That way you can email them tailored recommendations, or if they have abandoned their shopping cart without completing their order, be sure to email them, making it easy for them to buy the items they have selected.

Twenty Three

Fix slow loading pages. People won't have the patience to wait for slow pages to load up and you will lose business as a result. Optimise the coding on your site and invest in a good website hosting provider.

Twenty Four

If you are planning on selling world wide you will need to install a plug in that allows you to translate the text and currencies on your site with ease.

Twenty Five

Have a good SEO strategy as you want people to be able to find your site after all you have invested in it.